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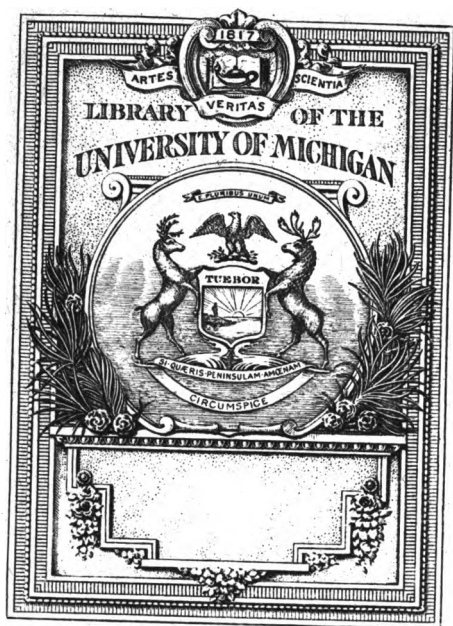
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SPEECH
OF
CHARLES, EARL GREY,
ON THE
STATE OF THE NATION,
IN THE
House of Lords,

ON FRIDAY, JUNE 14th, 1810.

TAKEN IN SHORT HAND BY MR. POWER.

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PREFACE.

IN giving to the public this report of Earl Grey's celebrated speech, the Reporter, after all the care he could bestow on it, is bound to acknowledge its many necessary defects, arising chiefly from the want of accommodation for short-hand writers in the House of Lords, and the interruption to which they are consequently exposed. He is confident, however, that the substance of each sentence is carefully preserved, and in almost all, that the language is as faithfully recorded as the circumstances of the case permit. He is bound, in justice to himself, as well as to the noble Earl, to add, that whatever merits or demerits

the report may possess, rest with the Reporter, as his Lordship never has seen or even been informed of the report, and knows nothing whatever of this publication.

London, July 7th, 1810.

SPEECH,

&c.

EARL GREY rose and addressed their lordships to the following effect :

My lords, The great and rapidly increasing difficulties with which this country is surrounded ; the measures of his Majesty's Ministers, obviously tending as I think in no degree to alleviate the pressure of those difficulties, but calculated rather to aggravate the common danger ; my apprehension of the prospect before us ; the still more alarming and fatal consequences which we have to dread from the course of past proceedings, if the aspect of our affairs does not materially and promptly change ; these combined considerations have made me extremely anxious, even at this advanced period of the session, before we separate for the summer, to bring into discussion the whole situation of this country, not only in so far as respects our foreign interests, but with regard to those circumstances

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which immediately bear upon our domestic tranquillity. I am induced to this undertaking in the hope, that your lordships will see the absolute necessity of offering to your Sovereign your advice in a crisis so extraordinary and alarming. It would, indeed, be an act of the highest presumption, if I were to set up my individual opinion against the collective judgment of your lordships, either by placing it in opposition to past decisions, or holding it forth as the guide for your future conduct. For if I could be persuaded that in the present state of affairs, your lordships saw no grounds for apprehension—nothing to excite your fears, or to demand your utmost vigilance ; if I could bring myself to believe that in the midst of dangers such as I have adverted to, you still were of opinion, that the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers was calculated to diminish them; if I could assure myself that it was your conscientious and deliberate conviction, that the composition of the present administration was such as the exigencies of the time demand—that it discovered no signs of deficiency in the wisdom and energy so imperatively required by the nature of public events—that the measures of the government had been only counteracted by such obstacles as human prudence could neither

foresee nor controul—believe me, my lords, under that persuasion, I should not on this day have ventured to importune you with any proposition of mine. I could not hope to be successful in such a course ; and with so many and such strong reasons, forbidding the attempt, I should only be disposed to question the soundness of my own judgment. But I cannot prevail upon myself to think that such are either the opinions or the feelings of your lordships. It would ill become me—indeed it would be inconsistent with a due respect for this House, were I to suppose, that in the various discussions which have taken place since parliament was assembled, the votes of your lordships were not given in the belief that you were discharging the duty you owed to your country, in the most conscientious manner. I can however easily conceive, that, impressed with a sense of the peril of the times, appalled by the numberless and perplexing difficulties of the country, many of your lordships were influenced by a strong apprehension, that an opposite conduct to that you pursued, might considerably multiply and aggravate the distresses of the empire ; that you dreaded, lest the dangers in which we were involved, might be augmented in their extent, and accelerated in

their calamitous results, by such a recorded dis-
 approbation of the measures of government,
 as might lead, at a moment like the present,
 to a change in the councils of the state; and
 I can imagine that the influence of such feel-
 ings induced you to support measures, from the
 general character and effect of which, you
 could not have derived much satisfaction.
 Without supposing the existence of an influ-
 ence such as I have described, how else shall
 we be able to account (except on grounds
 which I should indeed be most unwilling to
 impute to your Lordships,) for the extraordinary
 appearances exhibited during the session, now
 drawing so near its close? How else shall we ac-
 count for the continued existence of an ad-
 ministration, so generally reprobated, so lost
 to all public confidence, so degraded in the
 estimation of the country, that although
 within these walls they have met a general
 support, sufficient to maintain them in office,
 yet it is scarcely possible in any other place
 to meet an individual, and certainly not
 any considerable number of persons, who are
 not active and loud in complaining of their
 total inadequacy to discharge the important
 duties which they owe to the state? Under
 the impression then, that the genuine feelings

of your lordships are not at variance with the universal conviction of the country; and accounting for your apparent support of ministers upon the supposition of feelings, which however venial to a certain degree, would if pushed to an unlimited extent, be highly criminal and endanger the safety of the country—under this impression, I say, I have felt it my duty (however little encouraged by the experience of the present session) to call your serious attention to those causes, which in my mind have produced the dangers that press upon us in this emergency, and to the policy which it is incumbent upon us to adopt, in order that we may be enabled effectually to meet, and ultimately to surmount them.

In undertaking this task, my lords, I do assure you, that I have been much more impelled by the strength of my feelings, as to the critical situation of the country, than by any confidence in the extent of my own powers. That diffidence which I must ever feel in submitting to the consideration of your lordships, any great political proposition, is as I approach the contemplation of the question which I now intend to discuss, considerably increased;—increased by the importance and variety of the subjects which it embraces, and still more increased upon my being upon this day deprived

of the personal support and co-operation of a noble friend of mine,* whose absence is occasioned by the continuance of that indisposition which we all lament. To his wisdom and experience, to his judgment and his learning, to his ability and eloquence, I had looked to supply those deficiencies of mine, which I fear will be but too apparent before I conclude. But although unfortunately deprived of that assistance which the talents and eloquence of my noble friend are so well calculated to afford; I have, however, the great consolation to communicate to your lordships, that I feel fully fortified in my own opinion by knowing that it completely accords with his declared sentiments; that I have the satisfaction of being sanctioned in the course I am now pursuing, by his high authority; and that the specific motion with which I shall have the honour of concluding, both in the principles upon which it rests, and the objects to which it points, has his sincere, unqualified, expressed concurrence. After these preliminary observations, I shall now proceed to lay before your lordships in detail those most important matters to which it is my duty this day to solicit your attention.

My lords, in directing our minds to the

* Lord Grenville.

difficulties under which the country at this moment labours, we are in the first place naturally urged to advert to the amount of the public expenditure—an expenditure which has been carried in the course of the last seventeen years of war from a sum of sixteen to no less than eighty-five millions a year. Looking to that exorbitant and monstrous increase—considering the appalling taxation necessary to supply such an expenditure, and the sources from which the supply to meet it is provided—considering the severe and vexatious means by which that supply is collected—means so grievous and oppressive, that they are at this moment the subject of universal complaint—but above all, keeping fully in our recollection the awful statement made by those most intimately conversant with such matters, namely, that in this country, taxation has arrived at a height beyond which it could not well be carried—that it has been extended almost to its fullest reach, and that it has nearly attained its utmost limits—looking, I say, my lords, at these combined and depressing difficulties, we are naturally led to the inference that what the country stands most in need of is repose. It cannot be a subject of astonish-

ment, that after seventeen years of unremitting sacrifices—during that calamitous period of protracted warfare, (for I cannot bring myself to call by the name of peace, that short and feverish pause, which continued for one year after the treaty of Amiens) it cannot be surprising, that after such a period of sufferings the country should at length find itself much in want of a cessation of hostilities. But I fear, my lords, that by the measures which have been pursued, and the consequences which have resulted from the system of its policy, this country has been brought into a situation that does not allow the acquisition of that relief to depend upon ourselves. I fear, that from the causes I have stated, we are reduced to the dilemma, either that the attempt on our part, to open the door to a negotiation, would not conduce to the attainment of our object, or that if that object was attainable, it would be unaccompanied with those essential securities, which alone could render it really valuable. If I saw in the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers any indisposition to avail themselves of such opportunities as may present themselves for restoring the blessings of peace—attended with those prospects and safeguards, which constitute the true character

of peace—there would be no man more forward than myself to urge the adoption of a better policy. But believing, that any such proposition originating with this country, would be viewed by the enemy only as a proof of our weakness and our fears—that it would tend rather to remove than to approximate the great object itself; and having no disposition to presume any unwillingness in his Majesty's Ministers to avail themselves of the first favourable opening for negotiation, although I most strongly feel that their conduct has been such, as almost to remove from us every hope of this kind; with such impressions, it cannot be necessary to urge your lordships to interfere upon a question which does not seem likely to come under the consideration of the government.

My lords, in stating to this house, my view of the difficulties which, under the present circumstances of the world, I feel to stand between us, and those blessings which would result from the cessation of war, I am aware of the predicament in which I am placed. I can have no wish to indulge an irritating language, which by exciting feelings of reciprocal acrimony between us and our enemy, might tend to foment the spirit of hostility, and still farther to prolong the miseries

of the contest. But, instructed as I have been in the moral duties of society, and educated under a free government, I hope to be allowed credit for all those feelings, which a just consideration of many of the acts of the extraordinary person, who stands at the head of the French government, must necessarily have excited; and, though so many remarkable circumstances attending his astonishing career, have contributed to make it, at least as to military greatness, unequalled in history, yet I can never consent to merge in the splendour of the achievements of him who is now the master not only of France but of Europe, all recollection of the means by which he has raised himself to the unparalleled eminence on which he now stands—means, which it is impossible not to lament and to condemn. No, my lords, unrivalled as is his military glory, my admiration of it shall never be indulged at the expence of my moral feelings; while, on the other hand, I am tenacious of avoiding any course, tending to encourage those impulses of nature, which might unnecessarily embitter and prolong the contest between this country and France, after so many years of devastation and of blood. But, when we look to such a subject as this, we must view it with

the eyes of statesmen. We must take into our consideration the circumstances in which our own country exists, the powers we possess, and compare them with the character, disposition, and energies of the nation to which we are opposed. Pursuing such a course it is impossible, my lords, when I consider that he who now sits exulting over the spoils of prostrate Europe, is checked in his hopes of universal dominion, and retarded in his progress to a more extended despotism, by the power, resistance and resources of this country alone—it is, I say, impossible not to believe him impelled by all those influences, which sway the human heart to look to the overthrow and destruction of Great Britain, as his fixed, his most desirable object, as that in which all his passions are concentrated, and to which all his designs are directed. This object is the sole aim of his policy—whether in war or in peace. To the latter whenever our enemy may incline to make it, we must only look, as to a period during which he may with more security pursue his plans against the freedom, independence and existence of this country. It would be folly and infatuation for us to act under any other conviction, or with any other prospect. Let me not, however, be understood as the enemy

to peace ; for peace, substantial peace, when it can be concluded with honour and with safety, no voice shall be raised higher than mine.

I know it may be said that the same arguments which I have advanced against the probability of peace at this moment, would also apply to France under its antient government, inasmuch as the like inveterate hostility prevailed in equal force under its former dynasty; and that such objections are not only adverse to peace, at one particular period, but tend to support the eternal duration of war. The justice of the latter inference I must disclaim; but, admitting that great animosity did exist against this country under the old monarchy of France—admitting that it entertained and acted upon similar views of aggrandisement and dominion, I call upon your lordships to consider how many circumstances, of change in the relative condition of the two countries are now to be estimated—to contemplate what a tremendous alteration has taken place, if not in the dispositions of the French government, yet certainly in the energies of its people and in the extent of power to bring those energies into action. France is now sole mistress of the continent; that dominion for which in the reign of Louis 14th

she so actively but ineffectually struggled, she has now acquired. The independence of Europe is lost—the balance of power is destroyed. The military greatness and character of Russia, Austria and Prussia are annihilated; incapable any longer to oppose, they have become wholly subservient to the interests and wishes of France, whose ruler, at the head of a nation situated the best of all continental countries for offensive operations, distributes at his will the nations of Germany and Italy to recruit his numerous armies, at the same time that he holds at his disposal the resources of all those maritime powers, who, in former times, had even disputed with ourselves the empire of the seas. Before peace can arrive, before it will be possible for us to make any sober estimate of the terms upon which it may be possible to accept it, I much fear it will become our duty to contemplate the great accession of power and resources, which France will derive from her subjugation of the peninsula of Spain. What is the inference from the whole? It is this; that, looking at the situation, of France, at the extent of its hostile means—considering the spirit by which it is directed, the power it has obtained, together with the character of its government,

its ruler as I before stated, not at the head of France but of Europe—contemplating all these things to what can we look? To nothing, my lords, calculated to insure safety, but the conviction that it is upon ourselves, and ourselves alone, we are to depend. We must conduct the war in such a manner as not to fear a failure of resources. We must conduct it in a manner which shall leave us under no apprehension for the result of that event, against which we ought to be prepared—I mean, that invasion, of which, neither the solemn obligations of treaties, nor the servile dependence of tributary vassalage, can prevent the attempt. How incumbent then, is it on us, my lords, to adopt that wise system of policy, which shall enable us to support the most protracted warfare; in order to secure our independence, threatened by the war, but scarcely less threatened by the probable dangers of peace itself! And what policy better calculated to resist the most formidable danger with which the liberties of any country were ever menaced than the provident system of husbanding our resources? This vital policy, I lament to say, has not been pursued by the present advisers of the crown; this was the policy once so reviled, of the administration to which they succeeded—of

that administration whose great crime it was that they did not, during the single year they were in office, redeem the country from the great and various difficulties which had been accumulating under the management of their predecessors. With the existence of that ministry all those principles of prudent government, which regulated their conduct and which the course of events rendered imperative, ceased to be respected. The country was precipitated into a system directly the reverse,—a system, whose first fruits we are now reaping in distress and in dishonour, but of whose ultimate operation no human sagacity can foresee the extent or the mischiefs. From that moment commenced the reign of vigour—the merits of whose policy are to be traced in those fatal expeditions which have exhausted the resources of the country, and covered our national character with disgrace. The noble earl opposite* on a former occasion, observed with that vague and general phraseology which he delights in, that this comparative question, on the merits of a political system, was not to be argued on one side as a question of economy, or on the other as one of extravagance; but that the

* Lord Liverpool.

propriety of one or the other must be determined by the circumstances and situation of the country; and that the system to be preferred, was that most likely to bring the contest in which the country is involved, to a successful termination. Most truly that is the question, and I cannot hesitate to go to issue with the noble earl on that point. I would ask him to state whether, after having made his experiment—after having pursued his system of vigour, he finds his progress accelerated to that successful termination? I ask him to acquaint your lordships, whether that object has been advanced by his expeditions, so unwisely planned and shamefully conducted, so totally defective in every thing, with respect to place, time, and circumstance, that it was absolutely impossible they could lead to any other result than has attended them—a result which the country is at this moment bewailing and weeping in tears of blood? Had his Majesty's ministers given to the state of Europe that consideration which a sound and salutary policy would have recommended, had they been affected by its almost total subjection, it was impossible that they should not be convinced that all the probabilities of success were in contradiction to the course they ven-

tured to pursue. They must have been struck with the folly and the ruin of embarking in military operations against France, at a time when there was no power in existence to give them an effectual co-operation.

With such a wide field before me, it is however not my intention, my lords, to review all those various and disastrous measures which have exhausted not one only, but repeated debates in this house. But as I have not availed myself of any former opportunity, when the question of the Spanish campaign was discussed, I cannot help referring to the conduct of the Ministers in the prosecution of that war. And here, I beg leave to assure your lordships, that there was no man who subscribed more absolutely than I did to the feelings of the Noble Marquis* which he on a former evening so eloquently expressed, for the purpose of inducing this house to persevere in its support to Spain; the hopes of no man were more alive to that great cause than mine were; no one was more mortified by the result. But I cannot concede to the sentiments of the Noble Marquis, the inference which his declarations assumed, that in order to warrant this country to embark in a military

* Lord Wellesley.

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co-operation with Spain, nothing more was necessary than to shew that her cause was just. In my mind, my lords, in passing judgment upon such a policy it was not enough that the attack of France upon the Spanish nation was unprincipled, perfidious, and cruel ; that the resistance of Spain was dictated by every principle, and sanctified by every motive honourable to human nature ; that it made every English heart burn with a holy zeal to lend its assistance against the oppressor : there were other considerations, of a less brilliant and enthusiastic, but not less necessary and commanding nature, which should have preceded the determination of putting to hazard the most valuable interests of the country. It is not, my lords, with nations as with individuals. Those heroic virtues, which shed a lustre upon individual man, must in their application to the conduct of nations be chastened by reflections of a more cautious and calculating cast. That generous magnanimity and high-minded disinterestedness, proud distinctions of national virtue, (and happy are the people whom they characterize !) which when exercised at the risque of every personal interest, in the prospect of every danger, at the sacrifice even of life itself, justly immortalize the hero, cannot and ought not to be consi-

dered justifiable motives of political action, because nations cannot *afford* to be chivalrous and romantic. Before they engage in any enterprize which is to be supported by the exertions and the energies of the people, it is the duty of the government to see, first, that there exist the means of rendering them effectual; secondly, that there is a sufficient policy to warrant the application of the means; and, lastly, that there are grounds of probability to induce a hope of success. It is only by an attention to such preliminary considerations as I have stated, that the affairs of nations can be prosperously or even safely conducted. It is because of the entire neglect of them, that I charge his Majesty's government with improvidence, and attribute to them all those national calamities and disgraces which are the natural effects of such incapacity. In submitting my opinions on the Spanish question last year, I then contended, as my Noble Friend also did, in opening the debate upon his motion, a few days ago, that before we embarked an army with the view of assisting the war in Spain, we should have felt the necessity of ascertaining whether there was a government in Spain, capable of affording such efficient support to the dispositions of the people, and to

our efforts for their assistance, as was likely to bring the contest to a successful termination. It was incumbent upon us to be informed whether there existed resources sufficient to supply a British army with those necessary provisions, without which no military operation could have been expected to prove successful. We should have duly considered whether we were not liable to be left without the required support, by being treated as principals in the war ; and whether, in fact, Spain herself was not destitute of these means, without which no war can be carried on, The positive disregard of all those necessary enquiries so discernible in the conduct of his Majesty's ministers, but which men of sound sense would have considered indispensable, furnishes additional reasons for pronouncing that conduct to be highly reprehensible. Last year it was fully evident, and I need not now go into any detail upon the subject, that before the advance of Sir John Moore and his army into Spain, his Majesty's Ministers had no account whatever of the state of that country. After the experience of that unfortunate campaign, what but the most positive proofs of the probability of success, should have induced them to risque another army in the same country, in the prosecu-

tion of similar operations? Yet, without any proofs whatever to justify the most moderate hopes of success,—with the history of their recent expedition staring them in the face, and loudly forbidding the pursuit, his Majesty's Ministers risked another army at the expence of enormous treasures, and the sacrifice of your best blood, only to purchase misfortune, calamity and disgrace!

These, my lords, are the grounds of my objection to the policy they have pursued. I allege it as a matter of charge against them, that they have indulged feelings, which however honourable, when considered abstractedly, ought never to be gratified at the expence of a nation's most valuable interests;—that in yielding to the influence of such feelings, they have rashly embarked in expeditions the most fatal and disastrous, and from which it was impossible to anticipate or effect any advantageous result to the country;—that they have done this too, in contradiction to that husbanding and preserving system rendered vitally necessary by the exorbitant growth of our expenditure; and without a strict attention to which it is impossible, my lords, to hope that our resources will enable us to meet the momentous dangers with which the country is threatened. Against these charges, his Majesty's

Ministers have powerfully grounded their defence upon the many dangers to be apprehended from the successful subjugation of Spain by France, and the increased power of the enemy which must result from that event. In answer—I ask, are these dangers diminished by their ill-judged policy? Is the power of Buonaparte lessened since we engaged in that warfare? Is the power of France reduced below what it was, when this country embarked in a military co-operation with the Spanish people? I much fear, my lords, that the contrary will be felt. I apprehend that the power of our enemy and the dangers which we dreaded, have since materially increased; while we have to meet that extended power and those augmented difficulties with impaired resources and diminished strength. If this be a true statement of the facts, (and too true I fear it is) does it not fully justify me, in charging his Majesty's government with a line of conduct contrary to that which a true policy pointed out, and which the circumstances of the country imperiously laid down.

Leaving the conduct of the war, respecting which much more might be said, the next point to which I beg the attention of your lordships is the policy which has been observed by his

Majesty's Ministers, with respect to those few powers, who were unconnected with France, and whom it should have been our object to have assisted or conciliated. It is not my intention to enter upon the history of their fatal attack upon the honour and independence of Denmark; neither am I inclined to argue now, whether that kingdom would probably have fallen under the controul of France, or to enquire whethen that event was likely to be prevented by our having forfeited all character of national justice. But I ever shall contend, that by such a forfeiture of our moral character by that act of atrocious violence, we excited the rancorous hostility of that power, and created an enemy much more formidable than it ever could have become, by its unwilling acquiescence in the dictation of France. Sicily, my lords, is also a connection upon which I do not wish to dilate. Our relations with that power are of considerable delicacy; and from all I know of the policy pursued by his Majesty's government, I have reason to think it has not been such as the situation of affairs required, or calculated for the security of that country. I fear it is left in a situation of danger, from which if a different system be not quickly adopted, it will be impossible to rescue it; that without

such change, in defiance of our maritime superiority—notwithstanding our military and pecuniary assistance, by which we have hitherto secured the independence of that country, we may with a lamentable certainty portend its fall under the sway and dominion of France. But, in reviewing this branch of our policy, I am most anxious to direct your consideration to the situation of another, and the only remaining neutral power, with which the re-establishment of the relations of commerce and amity ought to have been your great object; I mean America. My complaint against his Majesty's government upon this point is, that they have not only overlooked all that ought to have formed the object of our most anxious solicitude, namely, an amicable arrangement with the neutral power, whom it was most our interest to conciliate, and who was most capable of resisting the attacks of France; but that all their measures have had the very opposite tendency. It is impossible now to enter at large upon a subject that had occupied not only many debates but almost the whole of a former session. We who were opposed to the system pursued by his Majesty's Ministers, contended that it would be productive of most serious disadvantages. We predicted its ruinous consequences when it was first proposed, and the opi-

nion then entertained by us, we have since found no reason to relinquish. We have been since told, that the trade of the country has not suffered by the Orders in Council, or at least not in the proportion and to the extent that we anticipated. Can his Majesty's Ministers state, that our trade has been *supported* by an adherence to those Orders in Council? Can they tell us that although those Orders were carried into the fullest and most active execution, yet the disadvantages attributed to them by their opponents did not follow? They would not be justified in such a statement; they know that the reason of our trade not being injured in the proportion we predicted, was because his Majesty's government were compelled to depart from their own system; and exactly proportioned to that departure was the diminution of injury to the commerce of the country, and the failure of the predictions alluded to. Their system could only be justified upon two grounds; either to compel the enemy to repeal his decrees against our commerce, or to prevent American navigation from engrossing the whole of our foreign European trade. With regard to the first point, I now may be allowed to recal to your lordships' recollection the arguments of his Majesty's Ministers, when they inter-

duced their extended system. "That charge," they contended, "was necessary, because the original modified order of the 7th of January, issued during the administration of their predecessors, had failed in its effect, inasmuch as it had not compelled the French ruler to repeal his decrees."—I ask your lordships to try their system by the same criterion. Has the ruler of France, even under its operation, relaxed his measures, or repealed his decrees? Has he shewn any disposition to do so? Have you not, in order to supply the wants of this country, in articles of the first necessity which he was willing to afford, been obliged to enter into a species of compromise, by which he suspended the partial operation of his decrees, while you departed from the letter and the spirit of your own Orders? With respect to the navigation of America, was it not plain that under existing circumstances, no foreign European trade could be carried on, except under a flag that was neutral? The only neutral power in the world was America. In this view what has been the result of your policy? It is this, that your Orders in Council have gone directly to destroy the only neutral power, not under the dominion of your enemy; and the consequence has been, that the trade once carried on to your advantage by America,

and with which you could not dispense, is now transferred to other flags belonging to European powers, completely under the dominion of France, and wholly subservient to the wishes and interests of its ruler. Looking to the conduct of that great political and military genius, the effect seems to correspond with a deep-laid design. We seem to have given effect to his object. American navigation could not be dangerous to us. It was impossible for him to avail himself of American seamen to man the fleets of France. They might indeed be serviceable to us, by their employment in British ships, under the prospect of being likely at some future time to return to their country. But between this country and America there can be no ground for apprehension that theseamen of the latter could ever be made available to the objects of France. Between us and them the only question that could occur is one of commercial profit and loss; but by the effect of excluding America, we have transferred the trade to a foreign flag, covering the trade and navigation by the subjects of foreign and European states, completely at the will and disposal of Buonaparte: establishing a formidable nursery of seamen to equip his navies whenever he may feel the necessity of carrying such a speculation into effect. You have

given him the very thing he wanted, when he talked of "ships, colonies, and commerce." In order, my lords, to convince you of the extent to which this evil is carried, I have only to refer you to the returns upon this subject laid before parliament. By these papers, it appears, that in the year 1807, there were engaged in the European trade, of British seamen 42,587, and of foreign European seamen, 46,152. In 1809 the numbers of British seamen were reduced more than one half, viz. to 19,600, while that of foreign Europeans amounted to 43,000. We then resorted to the expedient of extending licenses, which in 1806 amounted to 1,200, and the last year to no less than 15,000, and thus we gained a comparative extension of trade; which made the number of British seamen employed in the European trade in the year 1810, amount to 34,837, while that of foreign European seamen thus engaged, was 58,476. It must therefore be evident to your lordships, that the operation of your Orders in Council (notwithstanding the reprehensible expedient of granting licenses) has produced the diminution from the year 1807 to 1810, of the number of your own seamen employed in the European trade, to the amount of 7,750, while in the same period it has increased that of foreigners, by 12,334.

How, I would ask, are these men employed? They are employed in the navigation of the seas of Europe, in the navigation of your own coasts, in conducting innumerable vessels along your own shores. It is this description of force, that like panders to the ambition of your enemy, you are rearing to enable him more effectually to consummate his plans of hostility against your country—it is a force, that has grown in the same proportion that you have extended your visionary projects in mercantile legislation, and its creation is the genuine result of your commercial war. Thus much I say—as to the effect to be produced upon your naval power; but the evil does not stop here. This trade is carried on by licenses; it has consequently fallen under the direct controul of the executive government; a system inconsistent with the true principles of a free government; for what more fatal source of influence can be conceived?—A system, than which there can be nothing more adverse to the free spirit of commercial enterprize; for what more dangerous principle,—what arrangement more surely fatal to trade and more inveterately hostile to its whole spirit, than to vest in the government of the time a power to withhold or to grant the power of trafficking,—to restrict, or to extend, according to its pleasure or caprice, or according to official

interests, the speculations and the adventures of your merchants? But perhaps I may be told, that in the distribution there has been neither a partial permission nor improper refusal. I must say that I have heard of instances which induce me to believe the contrary. But I want no such instances to excite my most serious apprehensions—to persuade me that the practice in question is infinitely liable to the worst of abuses—to call forth my most strenuous opposition to such a system—convinced that its obvious tendency is to undermine and subvert those principles, upon which the mercantile greatness of this country, the pure administration of our government, and the stability and security of the British constitution, as well as of British commerce mainly stand.—I do therefore protest against such a dangerous power, productive as it has been of such injurious effects, and calculated to produce much greater evils, being any longer vested in the hands of his Majesty's Ministers.

Much more might be said, but I hasten to other subjects. I have, my lords, stated to you the impolicy and improvidence of his Majesty's Government, in profusely squandering the blood and resources of the country, not only without advantage, but with no other

acquisition than national calamity and disgrace. In my view of their policy with foreign powers, I felt occasion to advert to the opportunities they have neglected, and the mischiefs they have produced. Proceeding to a consideration of their domestic policy, I lament to say there is no cause for approbation; although one would have supposed that having by their failures and disgraces added so largely to the extraordinary expenditure of the country, they would, at least, have devised some systematic arrangement of finance to provide for the increased expence. We had a debate on this subject the other night, when two of my noble friends near me* urged with their usual ability and information, the impolicy and improvidence of the system of finance, (if system it could be called) adopted by his Majesty's Ministers. They pointed out, by a reference to the last three years, the practical illustrations of that improvident expenditure, which has exceeded by between eight and ten millions annually, the united scale of expence of the last administration—that administration which was so reviled by their political adversaries for a sordid economy, destructive, as they alleged,

* Lords Lauderdale and Lansdown.

to the character of the country, and little consistent, it was said, with its permanent prosperity. Yet his Majesty's Ministers never thought it necessary to take one single step to provide for the excess created by their own mismanaged operations. This has been met by temporary expedients—expedients as little suited to the permanent prosperity of the country, as the expenditure itself was adapted to the state of its resources. In the year 1807, the first year of their administration, the minister who had the care of the finances, carried into effect the financial arrangements of his predecessor so far as it served his purpose ; that is, he charged the interest of 12 millions upon the war taxes, without adopting the other remedial parts of the system of my noble friend. In the following year, 1806, we find the resources raised by a variety of means. The committee of finance procured for them from the bank, an advance without interest of 3,500,000*l.* by which the loan wanted for the year was reduced to 8,000,000*l.* and the charge for interest, sinking fund and management amounted to 729,000*l.* To meet this charge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer availed himself of the following means :

From the Bank, as a reduction
from what they had previously
received for the management
of the national debt, £65,000

Annuities charged on the consoli-
dated fund, which had fallen
in, amounting to 375,000

In all £440,000

There then remained of the provision for the year to be raised by new taxes, 289,000*l.* for which he provided by the very novel and ingenious expedient of an increased per centage on the assessed taxes, and increasing the stamp duties to the amount of 290,000*l.* In 1809 he defrayed the charges of the year by once more, but to an unheard-of amount, breaking in upon the war taxes, having made them answerable for the interest and sinking fund on the loans, amounting to 1,040,000*l.* This was an enormous departure from the system adopted and persevered in with so much difficulty, of raising taxes within the year to meet the annual expences, and of reducing, as much as possible the amount of the annual loans. In the present year, 1810, the interest on

the loan, amounting to 970,000*l.* has been charged on the consolidated fund, without any new provision whatever being made to meet it. This the Chancellor of the Exchequer has attempted to justify, on the grounds of the great produce of the stamp duties imposed in the year 1808, beyond the sum for which they were then taken. Such a principle has never before been acted upon, although, in point of fact, a similar increase of produce has often occurred without any one instance of such an application as the present, since the consolidated fund was established in 1786. And, my lords, the strong and unanswerable objection which a Right Hon. friend of mine made to such an application, is, that the public creditor has a right to the whole security, because the interest of all stock created by any loan, being charged upon the consolidated fund generally, the surplus of any one duty should go to make up the deficiency of another. For instance, on the 5th of January 1810, when the taxes imposed in 1808 gave a surplus, the taxes imposed in 1805 and 1806, leave a deficiency; or, taking the statement with the whole of the charge, for the present year included, it will stand thus, viz.

Charge on the consolidated fund for seven years, ending 5th of January, 1810	£7,258,450
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Produce of taxes raised to meet the same	8,543,729
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Surplus overcharged on the 7 years	1,287,279
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Deduct the charge of this year, as provision made for the new loan,	970,000
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There will remain a surplus of no more than	317,279
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Is this a wise system for his Majesty's government to act upon, in their financial arrangements? Ought they to depend upon the produce of a year of much extraordinary revenue, not calculated upon by the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself to be permanent? Indeed the arrears of the assessed taxes alone, collected this year amounted to above 500,000*l*. What have they to expect, when in a future year such temporary sources of supply fail, but that we must experience a deficiency in the means to provide for the expenditure? Is not this a justifiable cause for the interference of your lordships? Is it not a sufficient motive to enquire fully into the state of your resources; and vigilantly to guard against measures hav

ing such a direct tendency as I have described? My lords, I say it is impossible to expect ultimate safety, unless the resources of this country are rescued from such improvidence and mismanagement. I entreat you then seriously to look into the consequences of the present wasteful expedients, and to consider what, under the present circumstances of the world you would have to provide for, even in a year of peace. The funds which go to meet your peace establishment, consist of the surplus of the consolidated fund, added to the annual duties, formerly called the land and malt taxes. Taking the surplus of the consolidated fund at five millions, and the annual duties at three, those, with the lottery, constitute the whole fund to meet your peace establishment. Now it has been estimated by those best able to form a judgment upon the subject, that our establishment upon a peace could not be less than fifteen millions, and as your proper funds would not afford more than 8,500,000*l.* your means would be less than your expenditure, by at least 6,500,000*l.*; and for this large deficiency you would have to provide by an addition to your permanent taxes. My lords, taking this view of the subject, is it not an additional reason for calling upon your lordships to give some check to

ministers, persevering in such a destructive course? Does it not become necessary to take a view of the difficulties in which they have placed the country, and to compel those entrusted with the administration of public affairs, to determine upon some permanent system of finance, calculated to avoid any anticipation of our remaining resources, without making provision for difficulties actually foreseen?

The next subject to which I would call your lordships' attention, is, one not yielding in importance to any of the former points to which I have adverted. It is to the present state of your circulation. I was one of that committee which was appointed on the stoppage of the Bank; I can give it no other name. Although a member of that committee which recommended what was called a restriction on the Bank, with regard to its payment in specie, I certainly differed from the majority on that subject. I did conceive, notwithstanding the great stress laid upon the difficulty of the situation in which the Bank was placed, that it would be more advisable to submit to any extremity, rather than proceed to the adoption of a measure, so novel in this great commercial country, and so utterly irreconcilable with all the maxims and habits of the people. The

committee were, however, of a different opinion, and their proposition was sanctioned by a resolution of the House of Commons. Upon that occasion I argued against the expediency of such a measure, to meet the evil of that day. I did express my fears, that the pernicious effects of that proposition would be, to extend the circulation of paper so far, that its depreciation would follow, and with it the great and numerous difficulties connected with the remedy of such an evil. My apprehensions have been unhappily realized; the evil I dreaded has actually arrived; and yet not a single step has been taken by his Majesty's government, upon a question involving such delicate and momentous interests. If at the time the restriction was originally adopted, any one had talked of its continuance, for three or even two years, the supposition would have been considered extravagance itself; the very mention of the thought would have alarmed the whole country; but what is the fact? It has now continued for thirteen years, and though within that interval there was one year of peace, yet up to the present period nothing has been done by ministers, towards any arrangement, calculated to put an end to a system of circulation, which was at first only introduced on the ground that it was not

intended to be permanent. It is true, that the question has been taken up in the other House of Parliament, and from the talents and research of a learned friend of mine, with whom the measure of appointing that committee originated, I entertain hopes of deriving much valuable information upon the subject ; still I ask your lordships to consider whether the subject is not of such sufficient, such pressing importance, to demand your immediate interference. The inconvenience resulting from your depreciated paper circulation is universally felt. It has been felt in the rates of exchange with foreign countries, in the great increase in the price of bullion, and I have the authority of his majesty's ministers for asserting, that it has been grievously felt, in conducting the operations of war. Those operations, my lords, which the very introduction of this restriction act (short-sighted policy) was intended to assist and to facilitate, have been by this very measure, as is confessed by his majesty's government, crippled and confounded. This is a subject to which the consideration of parliament ought to be speedily and seriously directed. What the suitable remedies are, it is not so easily to divine ; but, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion, that

you ought now, without delay, provide the means of bringing back the Bank, within such time as it may be done without great inconvenience, or danger to the country, to that system which is alone consistent with a free circulation, and without which trade cannot be supported—I mean the system of paying its notes on demand in cash.

Connected with our domestic situation there are many other points of considerable importance.—There is one subject in particular, which has been recently brought under the consideration of this House ; the decision of Parliament with respect to which, I cannot too deeply deplore :—I need hardly say, that I allude to the question upon the petition of the Roman Catholics. I will not enlarge upon the merits of a question, which has so lately been discussed, but I ever shall contend, that if you would preserve this country from the many dangers which surround it—if you would secure it from the meditated attack with which it is menaced, the sure and salutary means of arriving at so desirable an end, are by conciliation, and by placing a just confidence in every description of the king's subjects ; by uniting the hearts and hands of all classes of the people, in the defence of their common country.

The Noble Marquis in the blue ribband,* when exhorting your Lordships on a former debate, to persevere in the prosecution of the war with Portugal and Spain, dwelt largely on the danger that would threaten this country, and upon the facilities afforded to the enemy in his designs of invasion, if France should effect the conquest of that peninsula. But he particularly entreated your lordships to contemplate what might be the situation of Ireland under such a state of things. I also entreat him and you, my lords, to bestow your most serious attention upon the state of Ireland; not indeed with the view of continuing your armies in Spain and Portugal; but for the purpose of strengthening your most exposed and most vulnerable points at home. It is true, I fear, that France will possess, and shortly too, a point, from which the most formidable attack may be directed against the shores of Ireland. Let us then, my lords, before it be too late, provide for it that best security that chief defence, more impregnable than fortifications and navies—I mean the cordial attachment and combined energies of its whole people. Of your successful resistance to the

* Lord Wellesley.

attempts of your enemy, there would then, indeed, be little ground for doubt or apprehension. With this persuasion, I do confidently hope that notwithstanding the recent decision, this great question will yet be taken up by your lordships. I am indeed far from thinking that what is called Catholic emancipation, would be alone sufficient to eradicate the many political evils engendered during six hundred years of unvarying misgovernment. Would to God that a single act of Parliament could possess that power, and at once remove from Ireland all grounds of complaint, and all pretexts of disaffection! But though other measures besides concession to the Catholics, are necessary to the amelioration and prosperity of the Irish people, let that be the first and preliminary step in your progress to conciliation; make it the point from which you take your departure, to accomplish the great work of healing the divisions of the empire; and from which, believe me, you will proceed with feelings of renovated hope and recruited strength. Then will it be fully in your power to apply your consideration to other circumstances of domestic policy, such as the amelioration of the tythe system, the diffusion of education, measures of which that country

stands much in need. By adopting such a line of policy, you would make Ireland, now the source of your alarm, and object of your anxiety, not only adequate to its own defence against every attack, but actually competent to furnish the means of supporting the war, in whatever quarter the exigency of affairs might render your increased exertions necessary.

In the discharge of my public duty, I have this night, my lords, arraigned his Majesty's Ministers, for pursuing a line of conduct respecting the operations of the war, and the external difficulties we experience, wholly the reverse of that which the situation of this country and the circumstances of the world rendered absolutely necessary. Not less widely different from true wisdom and sound policy has been their marked inattention to the just complaints of the people; their indifference to the public solicitude, for a timely and salutary reform, not merely in matters of expenditure, but of those abuses in our political system which the lapse of time and the inroads of corruption have produced.

I have stated to your lordships, the amount of expence incurred only in your financial measures, and undoubtedly it is by bringing these

great branches of the public service within such limits as are consistent with the public safety, that any great saving can be expected. In the present situation of this country, much may indeed be done by the suppression of useless unnecessary offices, by the limitation of great lucrative ones, where no duty is performed by the person in possession, but of course I speak not of interfering with offices conferred for services previously rendered. Much remains and ought to be done both to satisfy the public, and to guard the government from the pernicious effects of an influence which is too rapidly spreading abroad. It is not to be denied that considerable savings may be made without inconvenience to the public; although I can by no means encourage the prevalent delusion, that any very great alleviation of the public burthens would follow the extinction of such offices; but what can be done with propriety ought to be done without delay. I am anxious to be fairly understood upon this subject. I am not one of those who will flatter the people, by asserting that every office of this kind ought to be swept away and wholly destroyed. I am prepared to admit that the whole amount of savings from this quarter as, compared with the national expence, would not be considera-

ble. I am ready to go further, and admit the necessity and policy of some such fund, existing to reward great and meritorious public services ; and that the right of distributing its fruits should be solely vested in the crown. What would be the effect of a contrary policy ? I am really ashamed to trespass upon your Lordships' attention, by further enlarging on a topic so well understood by that House ; but from what we are daily in the habit of hearing on this subject, I am desirous of speaking out plainly. Can it, I ask, be useful or advantageous to the public ; can it be an economy consistent with the due administration of the government, which by confining all the necessary business of the state to persons of large independent private fortunes,—persons from the nature and habits of mankind not to be supposed always the best qualified to discharge such great and various duties,—would exclude from office and merited emolument, men of the most transcendent endowments, with integrity and abilities peculiarly suited to promote the interest and perpetuate the glory of their country ? Select the proudest periods of your history, when the character of this country, in arms and in policy, appeared most conspicuous, and you will find

that the most distinguished persons in the direction of its concerns, were men, who by the exercise of their splendid talents, had risen from comparative obscurity in life to the most elevated situations; combining the honour and prosperity of the country with their own individual exaltation. Nor, indeed, have the people ever looked with disapprobation or with envy at the rewards or successes of such illustrious characters. Who that viewed the manors and domains of Burleigh, ever beheld with unpleasing recollections that monument of national gratitude, to that best of ministers in the most glorious of reigns? If the crown should be deprived of the power to reward great and eminent public service; if the most brilliant and efficient talents, the most honourable ambition were thus exiled from the administration of public affairs, to whose hands would the important trusts and best interests of the country be committed? Either to persons of large private fortunes, not always the best qualified to superintend them, or to greedy and profligate adventurers, ready to remunerate themselves, by their exactions and their frauds, for the deprivation of that fund now constituted to reward great and meritorious

claims. This proposition it is impossible to controvert; a contrary system would neither be dictated by justice, policy, nor even by common sense. It would expose the country to the ridicule of the world. But at the same time, my lords, that I feel the absolute necessity of preserving such a fund at the disposal of the crown, I am also most anxious that it should be limited in its amount, and regulated in its object; that it should be guarded by wholesome restrictions from misapplication and abuse; but above all, that any obnoxious instance of its being misapplied, where the abuse was flagrant, and consequent discontent propagated, should be immediately visited with condign censure. The interests and feelings of the public require this course; and though I am the last man disposed to solicit your lordships to yield to any unreasonable clamour abroad, yet under the pressure of their burthens, and with the sacrifices which the people are called upon to make, I consider it the duty of your lordships to spare their feelings, and consult their ease in those respects, as well as in larger and more important savings. An economy of this kind will produce the most advantageous effects; it will tend to

allay that disposition to complaint which is so generally gone abroad. In that point of view alone its benefits would be incalculable.

There is connected with this subject another to which I wish to call the attention of your lordships. I am not disposed to go the length of those fanciful theorists, respecting all the evils which they pretend to discover in the practice of the government, or to deny the legitimate influence of the crown to a certain extent. I would state, however, that it should be limited within due bounds, in order to produce the advantages to be derived from its beneficial exercise. Those certain and necessary limits, it is my firm persuasion the influence of the government has, of late years, very considerably exceeded. We recently had a discussion upon the subject of reversions, when it was contended by a Noble Viscount, upon the authority of a pamphlet, written by a member of the other House, that such influence had not increased. The opinion I then resisted, and my subsequent reflections have confirmed me in the propriety of the opposition. I am most unwilling to trouble you with the details; but is it possible to imagine or contend, that with an annual expenditure, increased from sixteen

millions to eighty-five millions—with such immense public establishments, both at home and abroad, employing so much labour, and exerting so much patronage,—that with the extension of your power and dominion in India, from recent territorial acquisitions, and of your colonial possessions in every part of the globe, there has not also been created a corresponding influence, by your increase of civil, naval, and military servants ; when in addition to all these you consider the vast number of persons, in consequence of your augmented expenditure, employed in the necessary labours of collecting the revenues, is it, I say, possible, that under all these combined circumstances, men can be found who not only deny the increase of this influence to an excess heretofore unknown, but actually to assert that it has not at all increased ? Firmly believing that it has increased, not only beyond all bounds, but beyond all calculation, I maintain that in addition to other motives of economy, where a reduction can be fairly made, it ought to be made, as well to secure the other branches of the constitution against such an overgrown power in the executive, as to give satisfaction

reform, and the reduction of needless offices : in my judgment, your lordships' duty does not stop here. You are, my lords, in the situation wherein it is incumbent upon us to look into these defects, which, having arisen through time, have injured the frame and corrupted the practice of our constitution, and to apply to the abuse such remedy as can be effected by a gradual, temperate and judicious reform, suited to the nature of the evil, the character of the government, and the principles of the constitution. I would not have ventured to make this avowal to your lordships, without much previous thought, and the most deliberate circumspection. The question of reform has long engaged my most serious contemplation. At an early period of my life, I certainly took up strong opinions upon this subject, and pursued them with all that eager hope and sanguine expectation, so natural to the ardour of youth. I will not say that there may not have arisen some difference between my present sentiments and former impressions ; still I beg leave to assure your lordships, that the general opinions I then formed, I have not in my maturer age seen cause to change, and that

whatever distinction exists between my early and my present views of reform, on its great grounds that question has not been abandoned by me. That a degree of difference exists between my present and former impressions is what I freely acknowledge ; he, indeed, must have either been prematurely wise, or must have learned little by experience, who, after a lapse of twenty years can look upon a subject of this nature, in all respects, precisely in the same light. But though I am disposed soberly and cautiously to estimate the principles of the constitution—though, perhaps, I do not see in the same high colouring the extent of the evil sought to be redressed ; and am more doubtful as to the strength and certainty of the remedy recommended to be applied ; still after as serious and dispassionate a consideration as I can give, to what I believe the most important question that can employ your lordships' attention, it is my conscientious opinion that much good would result from the adoption of the salutary principle of reform gradually applied to the correction of those existing abuses, to which the progress of time must have unavoidably given birth ; taking especial care that the

measures of reform to be pursued should be marked out by the constitution itself, and in no case exceed its wholesome limits. With respect to any specific proposition of reform of the other house of Parliament, I know not how to speak of it, fearful lest even in introducing the topic, I should transgress the bounds of that respect due to an integral branch of the legislature, and most particularly as the propriety of any proposition of this nature must rest upon the acknowledged imperfections of that branch, together with the abuses which have rendered it less strong as a barrier for the people, against the encroachments of power. But as nothing can be done on this subject without the concurrence of all the branches of the legislature; and as that which affects one branch concerns us all—as the question itself is of the highest importance to the nation at large, it is, my lords, of particular consequence even to so humble an individual as myself, that my opinion on this subject should not be misrepresented. I therefore am ready to declare my determination to abide by the sentiments I have before expressed; and that I am now, as I was formerly, the advocate of a temperate, gradual,

judicious correction of those defects which time has introduced, and of those abuses in the constitution of the other house of parliament, which give most scandal to the public, at the same time that they furnish designing men with a pretext for inflaming the minds of the multitude, only to mislead them from their true interest. To such a system I am a decided friend—wherever it shall be brought forward, from me it shall receive an anxious and sincere support. But as I never have, so I never will rest my ideas of salutary reform on the grounds of theoretic perfection. While I shall ever be ready to correct by the fixed principles of the constitution, an admitted inconvenience, where that inconvenience is practically felt, I continue to disapprove of all those general and vague speculations in which some men would wish to engage.

It was an objection formerly urged, and which has of late by certain persons been revived against many of the best parts of our constitution, and particularly against the powers and privileges of the respective branches of the legislature, that they are not to be found enacted

in any statute, or created by any written document; but what such persons advance as an objection to the practice of the constitution, I have ever considered as one of its greatest perfections. To this conviction I have been led, by all that I have learned from the highest authorities, authorities alas! with whose presence and instruction we shall no more be enlightened; but whose talents, wisdom, and constitutional learning, we all acknowledge and revere. It is the folly and presumption of the present day to adopt a contrary doctrine—to decry every thing that is not defined by statute—to deny all authority to any usage growing out of the principles of the constitution, if it happens not to be expressly supported by written law. Nor is it now for the first time that such dangerous errors have been propagated in this country by mischievous or misguided men; similar objections were once before urged, though from other quarters, against the powers of parliament, and led in their turn to the triumph of persons, who were equally enemies of all powers and privileges, in whichever branch of the legislature they might be vested—persons

whose objections are of a truly radical nature, and go against the existence of all authority and controul whatever, except that which their own hands have usurped. I need not remind your lordships that these political heresies plunged the country into universal anarchy, and had well nigh subjected it for ever to an arbitrary government. Happily by its own inherent powers the constitution recovered itself, and gradually established and assigned to its various branches, rights peculiar to each but necessary to the preservation of all, which in the harmony and co-operation of all its powers, have been found to give the best practical effect to its principles; and to lead directly to that system of efficient government best adapted to the spirit and happiness of a free people. If, my lords, any consideration more than another could confirm me in the validity of this doctrine, it would be the concurrent opinion of that great statesman, by whom it is the pride of my life to have been instructed and informed in the early part of my political career, I mean Mr. Fox, whose views respecting reform I had frequent opportunities of ascertaining in the course of many debates; and than whom there never existed one who more fully understood the principles or more affectionately appreciated

the blessings of the venerable constitution under which he lived. If, in his political creed, there was one article which he held more stedfastly than another, it was that while a system was practically good he would always abstain from mending it by theories. And never, my lords, can I forget his powerful observations, when in his place in parliament, he stated his conviction of the absolute impossibility of providing for all the variety of human events, by any previous speculative plans: For, said he, I think, that if a number of the wisest, ablest, and most virtuous men that ever adorned and improved human life, were collected together and seated round a table to devise *à priori*, a constitution for a state; it is my persuasion, that notwithstanding all their ability and virtue, they would not succeed in adapting a system to the purposes required, but must necessarily leave it to be fitted by great alterations in the practice, and many deviations from the original design. And this opinion he was wont to illustrate by the familiar but apt example of building a house, which, notwithstanding all the study and consideration previously bestowed upon the plan, was never yet known to supply every want or to provide all the ac-

accommodations which in the subsequent occupation of it were found to be necessary. Nay, he used to remark, that however fine to look at a regular paper plan might be, no house was so commodious and so habitable as one which was built from time to time, piece-meal, and without any regular design. To those principles of practical reform, so wisely enforced by that great statesman, I am determined to adhere; and the acquiescence of your lordships, it is my duty also to solicit; again repeating that the remedy I seek, shall be limited by the existing defects, shall be marked by the constitution itself, and not launch out into any extravagance of theory, which even appearances may recommend.

My lords, this is no new opinion of mine; for if your lordships will be pleased to lend your attention to any statement respecting so humble an individual as myself, I think it is in my power to prove to your satisfaction, that none other was ever entertained by me. It is necessary that I should go so far back as the year 1792, a period when such opinions were made the subject of more political heat and contention than at any subsequent time. At that period a society was formed to promote the cause of parliamentary reform, under the denomination of the Friends

of the People; and of this society I had the honour to be a member. At that time the Friends of the People both collectively and individually were exposed to much misrepresentation. We were subjected then, as it is my fate now, to have our motives and our conduct made the objects of great and unmerited obloquy. We were then held up to obloquy by the same description of persons, who now describe us as no sincere friends to reform, no real advocates for the rights of the people, because we were not prepared to support, what was then as it is now called, and most falsely called, a radical reform. These charges were communicated to the world in two declarations, published by a society formed at the same time; for the purpose of promoting constitutional information. In consequence of these charges, and in answer to some letters addressed to us by individuals, one of which was from Major Cartwright, who took the same part then as he does now, and I believe, conscientiously, we felt it necessary to make a public declaration of the principles upon which we associated, and of the constitutional objects to which our exertions were directed. It was signed by my noble friend near me,* then, Lord John Russell.

* The Duke of Bedford.

silk, and with your lordships permission, I will now proceed to read it.

" May 12, 1792.

" We profess not to entertain a wish " that the great plans of public benefit which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended, should be carried into effect;" nor to amuse our fellow-citizens with the magnificent promise of obtaining for them " the rights of the people in their full extent," the indefinite language of delusion, which, by opening unbounded prospects of political adventure, tends to destroy that public opinion, which is the support of all true governments, and to excite a spirit of innovation, of which no wisdom can foresee the effect, no skill divert the course. We view man as he is, the creature of habit as well as of reason. We think it therefore our bounden duty to propose no extreme changes, which, however specious in theory, can never be accomplished without violence to the settled opinions of mankind, nor attempted without endangering some of the most inestimable advantages we enjoy. We are convinced that the people bear a fixed attachment to the happy form of our Government, and to the genuine principles of our constitution; these we cherish as the objects of such attention, not from any

implicit reverence or habitual superstition, but as institutions best calculated to produce the happiness of man in civil society; and it is because we are convinced that abuses are undermining and corrupting them that we have associated for the preservation of those principles. We wish to reform the constitution because we wish to preserve it."

[We conclude by declining all further intercourse in these words.]

"We must beg leave to decline all future intercourse with a society whose views and objects, as far as we can collect them from the various resolutions and proceedings which have been published, we cannot help regarding as irreconcilable with those real interests on which we profess to inform and enlighten the people."

These were my opinions in 1792; and I at this hour continue to maintain them. These were the opinions arraigned by a description of persons with whom I then disclaimed all intercourse. They are the opinions now censured and misrepresented by the very same men, with whom I still disclaim all intercourse or association. I do not impute motives to any of them, although I feel how uncharitably they have attributed my conduct to motives

of the worst description; I accuse no man of bad intentions, although one should be disposed from recent exposures, and from the shameful conspiracies which every day is bringing to light, to think that some of those most active in vilifying the conduct of others, have themselves violated all those principles of honour and morality, which constitute the only sure basis of social life. Many of them, I sincerely believe, are actuated by no improper or unworthy motives, however they may have been imposed upon and misled; some I cannot altogether acquit. The path they are treading is dangerous in the extreme, and demands the most vigilant caution to prevent it from leading to a fatal termination. Whenever this great question shall be taken up by the people of this country seriously and affectionately.--(for, notwithstanding all we every day hear, I doubt much whether there exists a very general disposition in favour of this measure,) there will then be a fair prospect of accomplishing it, in a manner consistent with the security of the Constitution. But until the country shall have expressed its opinion upon this subject, the examples of the other nations of Europe should deter us from any precipitate attempt, to hurry on to pre-

mature or violent operation, a measure on which the best interests of the nation so essentially depend. For myself, I beg leave to repeat, that when I feel it my duty to give my support to it, it is on those principles which I have before laid down: those principles depend on practical views, which have been approved by all the great and honest men, who have been heretofore favourable to the measure of a temperate reform. The reform that they wished, and which alone I will support, is that which amends, not that which would subvert, the constitution. The change which I desire to see effected by temperate and constitutional means, is one which has for its object the restoration not the ruin of the government. When I act my lords, in this cause, it will be in opposition to men, who under the pretext of reform, would drive us into wild extravagant theories, wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principles of our system. I have dwelt thus long upon the subject, from my full conviction that to the success of a temperate reform, no impediment is calculated to have a more hostile influence than the attempt to force a reform by public clamour. Well would it be if government directing its views to the indispensable necessity of restor-

ing the decayed energies of the Constitution, should take up this great question with all that sound and statesmanlike caution, which it demands, and by moderate discussion, and seasonable relief, assuage the discontent which an opposite line of conduct has created in the public mind, and which I am afraid at this moment too generally prevails. In proportion as this question has been agitated by the public, I have been extremely desirous, that my opinions on it should be fully known; believing, as I sincerely do, that they are the only principles upon which reform can be effected, without endangering the constitution.

If, my lords, my anxiety to be fully understood upon the question of reform was great, it is not less so, upon another, affecting the privileges of both Houses of Parliament, and which is now so much the ground of popular agitation. I trust, my lords, that I shall not be supposed capable of doing any thing so improper, as to enter into the particular consideration of a question now depending for decision in another place; more particularly as it may eventually be submitted to the final judgment of your lordships. My only object in adverting to the subject generally is, to meet and to correct

those pernicious errors which are industriously propagated out of doors, respecting the privileges of parliament. Those privileges must depend on their evident utility and the indispensable necessity of their existence. If they are not founded upon those two principles, their exercise is unjust as well as inexpedient, and they ought not to exist. But one instance of abuse cannot warrant the inference that they are generally injurious, and unfit to be supported consistently with the constitution and the liberties of the people. I contend, on the other hand, that they rest upon their known utility, upon their being necessary for preserving that freedom of discussion and power of inquiry, without which parliament would be incapacitated from discharging its most important functions. It is on this broad principle that I form my judgment; and if like the common law, that invaluable source of all the people's blessings, it has its foundation in long usage, my opinion is strengthened, and my argument rendered invincible. All that is necessary for parliament is the power to protect themselves in the free uncontrouled discharge of their public duties: so far then as privileges are essential to that end, they must possess them, but no farther.

They must have the power to prevent obstructions, to protect themselves from insult, and to enforce their decisions, should any resistance be made to their authority. Deprived of such power, what security has parliament, what security has the people for that just and unprejudiced discussion for that freedom of deliberation, and for those ministerial functions on which, above all other privileges, our most valuable rights depend? Whatever privileges are requisite for those purposes; parliament *ex necessitate rei* must possess, or it must altogether cease to be that which the constitution intended. And though such powers should be carried to the extent of imprisoning persons guilty of a contempt of its authority, it must still be remembered, that it is exercised for the protection of the people, and the maintenance of public liberty. Against what obstructions, I ask, is it that the privileges of parliament are intended to provide? Is it not against the influence of the crown? Certainly, my lords; and there is no man who would go further than I would, in opposition to an unjustifiable exercise of that influence. But is it not possible for other persons to excite against parliament a popular indignation equally fatal to that uncontrouled discussion which constitutes its essence? If its deliberations

may be interrupted by popular insult and commotion, as well as by royal encroachment ; if its decisions can be made the subject of the most degrading calumnies, and wide extended slanders, is not the *civium ardor prava jubentium* as necessary to be resisted, as the unconstitutional invasion of the crown upon its freedom ? In either case, I contend, parliament must possess a power commensurate to the evil, to be exercised internally and separately by either House, without recurring to any other branch of the legislature. This, my lords, was the doctrine of our ancestors. This doctrine is the source from whence have sprung the numerous civil blessings which the people of this country beyond all other nations of the world enjoy. It is the doctrine which the best and ablest statesmen have uniformly held, since the Revolution. It is a doctrine which I have at all times maintained, and to which, I trust, I shall invariably adhere. I think it will be readily conceded to me that the Revolution saved this country from the intolerable scourge of arbitrary power. Whoever reflects upon the events of that glorious æra, and upon the conduct of the great men to whose exertions we are indebted for its success, a success which secured to us all our liberties, all our enjoyments, must be convinced that if the legislature had not then exercised those

powers, now so thoughtlessly questioned, we should not at this day have had to debate in a House of Parliament, about the extent of our privileges, or the rights of the people as connected with them. But even in the present times, when it has become so much the fashion to vilify and defame all public men, this doctrine has been sanctioned by high and eminent authorities. That great statesman, Mr. Fox, than whom there never lived a more strenuous and sincere assertor of the people's rights—a more irreconcilable, a more bitter enemy of every species of oppression; whose knowledge of the constitution, and of constitutional law cannot be disputed, nay has not been questioned even by those ignorant demagogues who respect no man; he, in the clearest and most forcible language—it is enough to say in his own language—stated his opinion in the support of those undoubted privileges. His great political opponent, Mr. Pitt, never attempted to controvert this opinion, and it is therefore to be presumed that he held the same sentiments. Mr. Burke too, and other eminent men of the day maintained the like principles; and surely when we see so many high authorities, who differing on so many other subjects, all concurred on this, it does not require, even in this period of popular distrust, any violent exertion of charity, to

conclude that they had not all conspired against the liberties of the people, and in support of parliamentary privileges, which were illegal and unconstitutional. It is an old and sound observation, that even laws not put in force, which have lain upon your statute-book as a dead letter, ought not to be repealed without serious deliberation, unless some practical inconvenience has resulted from their continuance; and that not unfrequently the moment of repeal has illustrated the wisdom of the enactment. This observation is not inapplicable to the privileges of parliament, which, though they may be argued against, can never be properly valued, until, unhappily, their extinction shall take place, when the evils of the rash innovation would awfully prove the wisdom of our ancestors in claiming and asserting them. But, my lords, I will not rest my argument upon authorities however eminent and distinguished. It stands upon the broad basis I have already stated, of general utility, and the absolute necessity of such powers, in order to preserve to parliament the due exercise of those important functions, with which it is entrusted. I am aware, my lords, of all the popular arguments which have been employed, to excite in the public mind an aversion to the existence of those privileges, such as that no one ought to be

judge in its own cause, that the individual was punished without trial, and that the party injured had no remedy or means of redress. My answer is, that those who thus argue against the powers of parliament, chuse to forget that a supreme power must exist *somewhere*, and must be inherent in *some* part of every constitution; that in any government there must be a point beyond which there is no appeal. The arguments which they apply to parliament, would go to an extent far beyond the wishes of those who use them, and would tend to the annihilation of some of the most valuable rights of the subject. For I ask, if upon such grounds parliament was to be dispossessed of its essential powers, if the abuse of a principle is to be perverted into an argument against its use, how could they, on the same reasoning, allow to the House of Commons the supreme command over the public purse; to your lordships, the supreme judicial power; to the crown, the more dangerous power of appointing to offices, and the sole and complete controul of our fleets and armies? Nay, my lords, upon such arguments, what would become of juries and their invaluable functions? And yet we find Sir Francis Burdett, though the supporter of ar-

guments that lead to the inferences I have described, holding himself forth as a martyr in the same good old cause for which Hampden died in the field, and Sydney and Russel on the scaffold ! No man, my lords, can entertain a more sincere veneration than I do for the names and memories of these undaunted patriots, who gloriously struggled, even to the sacrifice of life, to maintain the rights and liberties of their country ; but a more unfortunate allusion than this, in my opinion, could not possibly be made. Sydney and Russel did not fall martyrs to their resistance of any stretch or undue exercise of the power or privileges of parliament ; they were sacrificed through that corruption, which did not allow parliament the power so necessary to controul one of the weakest and most wicked governments that ever existed. And of what instrument, of what branch of the constitution did that base government avail itself in order to destroy them ? It was not parliament, my lords, but the verdict of a jury, that sent those illustrious patriots to their deaths,—of a jury influenced by the most base and profligate judges. It is very far from my wish, my lords, to detract in the

least from that most valuable institution, the trial by jury ; but let those who would argue from the abuse of a privilege or a power against the use of it, consider to what an extent that argument may be carried. I have said so much to shew the futility of such doctrines, and to influence your lordships by a calm and impartial discussion of the question, to dissipate the delusions which continue to prevail. In another of these popular arguments, it is asked, will you allow a power to the House of Commons, which is not possessed by the king ? My lords, I answer—the king's functions do not require it ; to the House of Commons it is essential for the due performance of its duties. The functions of the crown are those of benignity, favour and mercy ; and it is impossible in their exercise to bring the monarch into such a conflict with the passions and prejudices of his people as would render such a power necessary. Besides, the king has other efficient securities. Another good reason why such powers were never annexed to the crown, is that the king is an individual, and that it would not be wise or safe to have given to any individual such a power, in addition to the sole command

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of the army, and the whole influence of the executive government. But with regard to parliament the case was widely different. Parliament has often to originate harsh measures ; from it spring all the revenue laws ; indeed all their ordinances are restraints upon the people, and as Mr. Burke observes, the very imposition of taxes brings them and the people into perpetual conflict with each other. But though severe and unpalatable, their measures are still necessary, and they ought to possess the means and power of protection, against any effort of popular discontent. Nor is this the only argument, although I feel it a sufficient one. I have before requested your lordships to recur to the glorious æra of the Revolution. Reverting once more to the same period, can we forget the outrages of those violent mobs excited in support even of the doctrine of non-resistance ; and for the purpose of over-aweing the legislature ? Not unfrequently have a deluded portion of the public been excited even by the ministers of the crown for similar purposes ; and late occasions have shewn that the holy cause of religion may itself be pressed into such a service for the most mischievous of objects. The

same power then may hereafter, as it has been heretofore, become necessary to protect parliament in the due discharge of its functions; and the question resolves itself into this shape—whether there is any great danger of this power being abused, and whether it has ever been exercised to the oppression of the nation? It has been unquestionably carried into practice in the best times of our history; although I am willing to admit, that there have been recent cases in which it would have been more wise and politic to forego its exercise. But I ask without fear, whether in the recollection of any one who hears me, this power was ever exerted oppressively to the nation; and I think it but justice to the different governments which within my knowledge have had the administration of public affairs, however I might have differed from them on great public subjects, to observe that they allowed as great a latitude of public discussion, and even of censure of parliamentary proceedings, as was compatible with the safety and interests of a state, in times of the greatest freedom. Could this lenient and forbearing practice have arisen from accident, or was it owing to particular individuals, or particular periods? Rather, my lords, should we attribute it to the

result of a general principle, which was acted upon by all governments, and which was not liable to degenerate into abuse. The very constitution of parliament was as a security that the privileges inherent in it would not be abused to any oppressive extent. They were in the possession not of one individual but of numbers, who it is improbable to suppose would combine in a scheme to oppress the people. Such a power vested in the crown, might be often arbitrarily exercised; but as it is not likely that the members of this House would conspire together to abuse the power with which it is entrusted, it is still less probable, that the members of the House of Commons, who are elected by the people, and who to the people must return, would resolve together, arbitrarily or tyrannically, to exercise a privilege against the people, by which they themselves as members, or as part of that people, were equally affected. But, even supposing such a conspiracy possible in contradiction to all these natural reasons, are there not powers of controul against such oppressive abuse, existing by the concurrent jurisdiction of both branches of the legislature; and ultimately in the power vested in the crown at once to terminate the abuse, by a dissolution of the parliament? The only danger

of great oppression would arise from a combination of the three branches of the legislature : a state of things too monstrous to be contemplated, and which, if it ever existed, would amount to a dissolution of the compact between the government and the people. In all those views of the question, I am fully satisfied, and every man who will enquire into the subject must arrive at the same conviction, that there are as many checks and securities imposed against the abuse of the privilege as the nature of human affairs will permit.

Much more, my lords, might be said both on the theory and general principles connected with this subject, but I shall content myself with having stated enough to call your lordships' attention to it, and with creating that temperate discussion, which may dissipate the illusions now too prevalent. I have felt it necessary to pursue this line of duty, with the hope of bringing back, if possible, those who appear to entertain erroneous opinions upon the subject, to a more calm and moderate consideration of its nature, and to a sense of the consequences which might follow from the accomplishment of their own views. In taking this course, I am by no means insensible to the danger of misrepresentation which I incur, nor of the

obloquy to which my motives and conduct will probably be exposed. I know how easy it would have been to have taken up the popular side of the question, and meanly to have courted popular applause at the expence of sincerity and principles. But such a line is little suited to the habits of my life, still less consistent with the feelings and principles by which my public conduct has been governed. I am not, however, ignorant of the degrading artifices by which this applause is acquired—artifices with which neither virtue nor talents have any connection—arts which men possessed of neither are best fitted to practice—men such as we have lived to see in the present day, who, renouncing the obligations of faith and honour, breaking through all the bonds and engagements that hold society together, have in their career of foul slander and dirty calumny, entirely set themselves above all the decencies of private life, above all the courtesies which those who really endeavour to discharge their duty willingly concede to their adversaries. For such arts and for those who have recourse to them, I shall ever feel a sovereign contempt; by me they can never be practised even to acquire the highest favours that my country could bestow. It is true I cannot but feel a deep regret if I

should see myself deprived of my popularity by any misunderstanding of my views and objects on the part of the people. This is however a sacrifice which I am compelled to make in common with men in all ages much greater than I can ever hope to be. But, my lords, it excites my warmest indignation to be robbed of it through the basest misrepresentations and vilest delusions practised by men, who without any regard to truth sacrifice every virtuous and really patriotic object to the shouts of a vulgar clamour. Yet even to this mortification I can submit with patience; feeling that it is the result of a defect inherent in all free governments. It has indeed been truly said, that in the distribution of her favours, popularity is as blind and fickle as fortune. If it should follow my humble efforts in that pursuit which I feel alone compatible with mine own honour, and my country's interests, I would hail it as a most grateful proof of having faithfully discharged my duty; but if I am reduced to an alternative between popularity and freedom of thought and action, I cannot ever hesitate a moment what decision to make.

*Laudo manentem---si celeres quatit,
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quæro.*

Under every sacrifice I never could endure that hardest of all servitudes, that lowest of all degradations, that most despicable and abandoned of bad pursuits, the deep and inexpiable guilt of flattering the worst passions of a capricious multitude only to delude and to betray them.

I have now, my lords, endeavoured to discharge what I felt to be an imperative duty. Much more might be said upon the various topics to which I have adverted. I might have said much on the state of the army, and the departure from that system which was the work of the great and accomplished statesman so lately removed from the affairs of this life. I might have said much on the disastrous campaigns in Europe, much on the affairs of India, but apprehensive that I have too long trespassed on your lordships' indulgence, I shall content myself with briefly recalling your attention to the points I have touched on. Of peace there is I am afraid but little prospect; but to restore its blessings, no favourable opportunity should be overlooked. Whilst war is indispensable let us have no failure in it, from a failure of our resources, but provide for all emergencies by the establishment of some stable system of finance. A free commerce, I have contended, is essential to the interests and the prosperity of this country. Let us then

endeavour to conciliate those neutral powers with whom any remaining intercourse can be carried on. Let us adopt promptly the best measures for re-establishing a free currency. The conciliation of all his majesty's subjects, and particularly of his subjects in Ireland, is at this time more than ever necessary, firmly to unite all classes of the people, in defence of the dearest interests of the empire. Let this be an object of your most serious attention; together with such economical reforms as are consistent with the public service; and, lastly, a temperate and cautious but sincere reform of those abuses which have corrupted the frame of our constitution, and whose continuance have excited so much public reproach. Of the privileges and powers of parliament, I have given a decided opinion, conceiving as I do that they are inherent in its constitution, and indispensable to the due exercise of its functions. These are the measures which hold out the best hopes of national safety. It is only by attention to them we can escape from the many awful dangers with which our country is encompassed, and its very system menaced, and in happiness at home and honour abroad, enable her to survive the storm that has desolated so many surround-

ing nations. My lords, I have the honour to move your lordships

That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, earnestly to entreat his Majesty's attention to the advice which, impressed with a deep sense of the increasing dangers of the country, his Majesty's faithful subjects the Lords spiritual and temporal in parliament assembled, have felt it to be their indispensable duty humbly to submit to his Majesty's royal consideration.

To state to his Majesty that we cannot doubt his Majesty's readiness to embrace the first opportunity of concluding a peace on just and reasonable terms; but that looking to the nature of the contest in which we are engaged, to the power of France, now unhappily established over the greater part of Europe, and to the spirit and character of the government of that country, we are convinced that this event so anxiously desired by his Majesty's loyal people, will be best promoted by proving to the world that while his Majesty is actuated by the most just and moderate views, we possess the means of permanently supporting the honour and independence of our country against every species of attack by which the enemy may hope to assail them.

That for this purpose it is indispensably necessary that his Majesty's government should henceforth adopt a wise and systematic policy, regulated not only by a just estimate of our present difficulties, but by a prudent foresight of the probable exigencies of a protracted warfare—that we have deeply to lament

that the conduct of his Majesty's ministers has been, in this respect, directly the reverse of what the interests and the safety of his Majesty's dominions required; that they have blindly involved themselves in schemes of continental operations when they could look to no power capable of affording them an adequate support; and rashly engaged in expeditions so defective in their plan, so impolitic in their objects, and so ill combined as to the time at which they were undertaken, that they could terminate only in an unprofitable waste of the resources and the blood of his Majesty's faithful subjects.

That whilst the war has been thus unfortunately conducted, and our future means of defence thereby naturally impaired, the conduct of his Majesty's government with respect to neutral powers has retarded any amicable arrangement, which has tended to alienate those whom it was most our interest to conciliate, and unite with us in opposition to the measures of France.

That for the professed purpose of counteracting those measures, a system has been adopted under which no independent power could be expected to acquiesce, and new and visionary projects in legislation have been resorted to which have brought almost every branch of our trade to depend on the permission, and to be exercised under the controul of the executive government; whilst a considerable portion of that trade has been transferred to a foreign navigation, thereby improvidently supplying the enemy with a new resource for the improvement of his navy.

That in what more immediately concerns our domestic policy we have equally to complain of the total want of wisdom and of foresight in the councils of his Majesty.

That instead of any well considered and permanent system of finance adopted to the exigencies of a protracted warfare, the expensive and improvident operations of the last three years have been supplied by temporary and impolitic expedients.

That our paper circulation, for which the restriction imposed on the Bank had removed the only adequate and effectual limitation, has been extended to a degree highly dangerous to the pecuniary interests of the country ; that no attempt has been made by wise and equitable arrangements to allay the discontents arising from religious differences amongst his majesty's faithful subjects, more particularly in Ireland ; and that under the unexampled pressure of a taxation necessarily burthensome in its amount, and severe in its collection, no measure has been taken to remove the causes of just complaint, either by introducing an effective economy into the great branches of the public service, or by the due consideration of such timely reforms as may in any instance be found requisite for restoring to our government that practical excellence which the gradual corruptions of time may have obscured or diminished.

That we should ill discharge our duty to his Majesty and to the public, if we were to disguise from him our well founded apprehensions, that owing to these and other causes, discontent and distrust are

beginning to diffuse themselves amongst his Majesty's faithful people.

That we entreat his Majesty not to listen to those who would persuade him that such discontent and distrust, in whatever degree they may exist, are solely to be attributed to the evil arts of men hostile to the interests of their country, and seeking to excite the people to an invasion of those institutions on which their freedom and happiness essentially depend. That we are firmly convinced such designs have as yet found no favour in the hearts of his Majesty's loyal subjects; and that nothing can afford to those who entertain them any hope of success, but that impolitic and offensive inattention to the real sufferings and just complaints of the people, that determined resistance of every proposed correction of abuses, which in our times we have seen produce such fatal effects in other countries.

That we humbly pray that his Majesty will be pleased to take this our dutiful representation into his immediate and most serious consideration; that he will see the necessity of adopting such measures as may deprive the enemy of all hopes of success from a failure of our national resources; that he will therefore actually concur with his Parliament in giving effect to economical and systematic arrangements for the conduct of the war, in providing for a recurrence to the true principles of a free commerce and circulation both at home and abroad; in endeavouring by a wise and liberal policy to unite in the bonds of

a common interest all classes of his Majesty's subjects of whatever religious persuasions ; and, lastly, that he will be graciously pleased to countenance the temperate consideration and deliberate adoption of such timely reformati^ons both economical and political, as may satisfy his loyal people, that the sacrifices required of them are strictly limited and faithfully applied to the real interests and safety of the public ; and that both for preventing the growth of any dangerous abuses, and for controuling the misconduct of his Majesty's advisers, they continue effectually to possess those securities which have been the boast of the British government, and are essentially inherent in every free constitution.

That we entreat his majesty to be assured that in recommending these measures with all the earnestness which a conviction that they are indispensable for the salvation of the country inspires, we never can lose sight of our obligation to support the just prerogatives and useful splendor of the crown, the venerable establishments of our holy religion, and the ancient and essential rights and privileges of parliament.

In our firm resolution to maintain these, under all circumstances and with all our authority and power, we are well assured that we shall not fail to receive the active concurrence and support of all ranks of his Majesty's faithful people, convinced as they must be, that it is no less their interest than their duty faithfully to adhere to those fundamental principles

of our government, which, assigning to its various institutions rights peculiar to each, and necessary for the preservation of all, secure by their happy combination and harmony, to the executive power sufficient strength, to the legislature its necessary independence, and to the whole community the blessings of a well regulated freedom.

FINIS.

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